

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 9, 10, 17, 18, 27, and 33-55 remain canceled in the present application. Claims 1, 6, 7, 15, 20, and 26 have been amended. Thus, claims 1-8, 11-16, 19-26, and 28-32 are presently pending, with claims 1, 20, and 30 being independent.

In the Office Action dated March 3, 2006, the abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it begins with an implied statement and it is over 150 words. Applicant has amended the abstract herein to correct the implied statement and to reduce the number of words to below 150. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the abstract be withdrawn.

Furthermore, the drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In particular, the drawings are objected to for failing to show the serrated and knurled refining surfaces recited in claim 7. As stated above, claim 7 has been amended to remove these limitations and, consequently, Applicant submits that the objection should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 30-32 are allowed and Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his time in considering these claims and attesting to their allowability.

Also in the Action, claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,958,304 to Barbee (the "Barbee '304 patent"). Claims 4-6, 8, and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Barbee '304 patent as applied to claim 1 and further in view of CH Patent No. 597763 (the "CH '763 patent"). Claim 7 is

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rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Barbee '304 patent as modified by the CH '763 patent as applied to claim 6, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,508,699 to Santoriello et al. (the "Santoriello et al. '699 patent"). Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Barbee '304 patent as modified by the CH '763 patent as applied to claim 5, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,168,511 to Amstrup (the "Amstrup '511 patent"). Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Barbee '304 patent as modified by the CH '763 patent as applied to claim 14, and further in view of the Santoriello et al. '699 patent. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Barbee '304 patent as applied to claim 1 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,823,414 to Seal et al. (the "Seal et al. '414 patent"). Claims 20-25 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the CH '763 patent in view of the Barbee '304 patent. Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the CH '763 patent in view of the Barbee '304 patent, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,112,518 to Doggett et al. (the "Doggett '518 patent"). Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the CH '763 patent in view of the Barbee '304 patent, and further in view of the Santoriello et al. '699 patent. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the CH '763 patent in view of the Barbee '304 patent, and further in view of the Seal et al. '414 patent. However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the prior art references of record, when considered singly or in combination, show or suggest the use of the structure recited in the claims.

Turning to the claims, amended independent claim 1 recites a tripe cleaning apparatus adapted to wash and refine a quantity of tripe. The apparatus broadly includes, among other things, a vessel and a rotatable member. The vessel defines an inner chamber for retaining a quantity of tripe. The rotatable member is housed within the chamber and is adapted to rotate in a first direction and in a second direction. The rotatable member presents a washing surface and a refining surface, wherein rotating in the first direction causes the tripe to be washed by the washing surface and rotating in the second direction causes the tripe to be scarified by the refining surface. The surfaces face away from each other, and the refining surface is more abrasive than the washing surface.

The structure recited in claim 1 enables a tripe cleaning device with several advantages. For example, the tripe cleaning device as claimed combines the washing and scarifying processes into one device while permitting each process to be performed independently of the other process.

Amended independent claim 20 recites a tripe cleaning apparatus adapted to wash and refine a quantity of tripe. The apparatus broadly includes a vessel, a disc, and a motor. The vessel includes a wall that defines an inner chamber, wherein the chamber is adapted to contain the quantity of tripe. The disc is housed within the chamber and is rotatable in a first direction and in a second direction. The disc includes an upper surface and a plurality of disc projections projecting from the upper surface of the disc. Each of the disc projections presents opposed washing and refining surfaces, wherein rotating in the first direction causes the tripe to be washed by the washing surfaces and rotating in the second direction causes the tripe to be scarified by the refining surfaces. The

washing surfaces are substantially smooth, and said refining surfaces are more abrasive than the washing surface. The motor is connected to the disc for selectively rotating the disc in the first and second directions. The structure recited in claim 20 enables a tripe cleaning device with advantages similar to those enabled by the structure recited in claim 1.

Turning to the prior art references of record, the Barbee '304 patent discloses a tripe washing machine including an outer housing 12 and a perforated drum 24 rotatably mounted within the housing 12. The washing machine further includes spiral baffles 70,72 attached to the inner surface of the drum 24. Baffle 70 loads and agitates the tripe when the drum 24 is rotated in a first direction. Baffle 72 unloads the tripe when the drum is rotated in a second direction opposite the first direction.

The Barbee '304 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the Barbee '304 patent fails to show or suggest a rotatable member with washing and refining surfaces that face away from one another (or are opposed as recited in claim 20), where the refining surface is for scarifying and the washing surface is for washing, and where the refining surface is more abrasive than the washing surface. Instead, the Barbee '304 patent discloses a washing machine with the tripe-holding drum 24 including a single, perforated, washing surface within the drum 24.

The CH '763 patent discloses a machine for the mechanical scraping and washing of tripe. The machine includes a cylindrical vessel wall 4,4' and a disc 3,3' that encloses an end of the

cylindrical wall 4,4' and rotates relative to the wall 4,4'. The cylindrical wall 4,4' is lined with horizontal bristles 41,41' and the disc 3,3' is lined with vertical bristles 31.

The CH '763 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the CH '763 patent fails to show or suggest washing and refining surfaces with the refining surface being more abrasive than the washing surface (and with the surfaces facing away from one another or being opposed). Instead, the CH '763 patent discloses a vessel that is entirely lined with bristles 31,41. The CH '763 patent simply does not show two distinct tripe-processing surfaces with one of the surfaces being more abrasive than the other surface.

Even if the CH '763 patent is combined with the Barbee '304 patent, such a hypothetical combination fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. Again, neither of the previously described references shows or suggest the use of a rotatable member with washing and refining surfaces that face away from each other (or are opposed), where the refining surface is for scarifying and the washing surface is for washing, and where the refining surface is more abrasive than the washing surface. Thus, even if these references are combined, they fail to show or suggest the use of the claimed invention.

Applicant will now briefly discuss the references of record that are cited in combination with the above references in rejecting some of the dependent claims.

The Santoriello et al. '699 patent is cited for its asserted disclosure of a serrated refining surface. The Santoriello et al. '699 patent discloses an apparatus for rinsing and scraping

mollusks including a perforated drum 14 with agitation protrusions 24 spaced within the drum 14. The protrusions 24 include abrasive elements 22.

The Santoriello et al. '699 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the Santoriello et al. '699 patent fails to show or suggest washing and refining surfaces, with the refining surface being more abrasive than the washing surface, and with the surfaces facing away from one another (or being opposed). Instead, the Santoriello et al. '699 patent discloses the drum 14 with a single type of surface and does not suggest two distinct tripe-processing surfaces that face away from each other, with one of the surfaces being more abrasive than the other surface.

The Amstrup '511 patent is cited for its asserted disclosure of disc drain holes and projection openings. The Amstrup '511 patent discloses a container 8 for rinsing meat including a side wall and top and bottom plates 10,22. A plurality of ribs 16 are attached to an inner surface of the side wall. Adjacent the bottom plate 22 is a plate ring 18 with a plurality of holes 20 therein.

The Amstrup '511 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the Amstrup '511 patent fails to show or suggest washing and refining surfaces, with the refining surface being more abrasive than the washing surface, and with the surfaces facing away from each other (or being opposed). Instead, the Amstrup '511 patent discloses the container 8 with a single type of surface and does not suggest two distinct tripe-processing surfaces with one of the surfaces being more abrasive than the other surface.

The Seal et al. '414 patent is cited for its asserted disclosure of a vessel including a washing fluid inlet pipe nozzle, a refining fluid inlet pipe nozzle, and a cold water inlet pipe nozzle. The Seal et al. '414 patent discloses a rotary drum 10 for cleaning bivalve mollusks. The drum 10 includes openings for passing the meat therethrough and retaining the shells. The drum 10 also includes baffles 18.

The Seal et al. '414 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the Seal et al. '414 patent fails to show or suggest washing and refining surfaces, with the refining surface being more abrasive than the washing surface, and with the surfaces facing away from each other (or being opposed). Instead, the Seal et al. '414 patent discloses the drum 10 with a single type of surface and does not suggest two distinct tripe-processing surfaces with one of the surfaces being more abrasive than the other surface.

The Doggett '518 patent is cited for its asserted disclosure of a switch for controlling the operation of a drive motor. The Doggett '518 patent discloses a rotating, tendon-cleaning cylinder 30 with a plurality of peripheral openings 31.

The Doggett '518 patent fails to show or suggest the structure recited in independent claims 1 and 20. For example, the Doggett '518 patent fails to show or suggest washing and refining surfaces, with the refining surface being more abrasive than the washing surface, and with the surfaces facing away from each other (or being opposed). Instead, the Doggett '518 patent discloses the cylinder 30 with a single, perforated surface and does not suggest two distinct tripe-processing surfaces with one of the surfaces being more abrasive than the other surface.

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Any of the references of record, when considered singly or in combination with any of the other references of record, also fail to disclose or suggest the use of structure recited in the amended independent claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 20, and 30 recite structure not shown or suggested in the prior art references of record. The dependent claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from these independent claims and recite additional features of the invention not shown or suggested by the prior art.

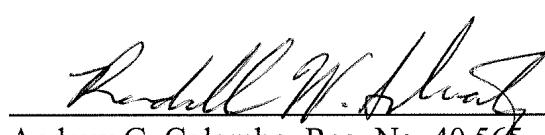
The present application should now be in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (800) 445-3460.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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